

DeSoto County, Mississippi

# Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway

Corridor Management Plan

Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway Corridor Advocacy Group

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## Introduction

### Corridor Boundaries and Descriptions

The Delta Bluff Scenic Byway is made up of three distinct segments that, taken together, allow visitors to view some of the county's most valuable resources. At this time there are no known proposals to alter the roadways or the intrinsic qualities associated with them. The three branches of the byway are:

*Northern Branch: Austin Rd. from MS 301 to Delta Bluff, Delta Bluff Rd. from Austin Rd. to the Great River Road National Scenic Byway (connectivity through the Town of Walls via Delta View Rd., US 161 and 2<sup>nd</sup> St.)*

The Northern Branch of the Delta Bluff Byway consists primarily of Delta Bluff Rd., extending west from Hwy 301 to the Great River Rd. in the Town of Walls. Connectivity through the town of walls to the Great River Rd. is provided via US 61, Delta View Rd., Highway 161 and 2<sup>nd</sup> St. The eastern portion of the roadway



Figure 1: Delta View Rd.

crosses gently rolling farmland, while the western portion is located in the Mississippi River delta. Travelers are able to experience the drastic change in geography between the delta, the bluffs and hills beyond them as they traverse the roadway. From the wide open expanses of the delta to the hills above them, travelers on this byway will gain a first-hand understanding of DeSoto county's unique, varied landscape.

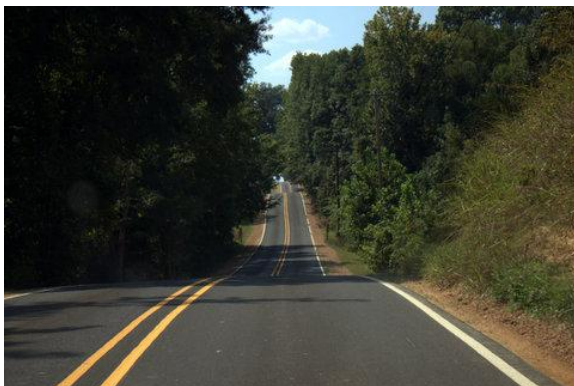


Figure 2: Austin Rd.

Land uses surrounding the corridor are primarily low-density residential and agricultural. Zoning is similar to existing land uses, with no plans or zoning for high density, industrial, or other non-conforming

uses. The portion of the byway located in the Town of Walls is surrounded by slightly higher-density uses, but these consist primarily of residences, schools, and small businesses. Given the scenic quality of central Walls these uses are considered a

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benefit to the route, highlighting the small-town lifestyle of DeSoto County and Northern Mississippi.

*Central Branch: MS 301 from Austin Rd. to Arkabutla Lake*

The Central Branch of the Delta Bluff Byway travels along Hwy. 301 from Austin Rd. to Arkabutla Lake. The road primarily traverses gently rolling farmland interspersed with small, local business and single family homes. Scenic vistas are frequent along the entire roadway, offering glimpses of DeSoto County's natural beauty as well as giving travelers an understanding of the county's rural heritage. Nearly the entire byway is surrounded by agricultural and very low-density residential uses, with corresponding zoning. Future land uses are expected to retain the rural character of the area



**Figure 1: MS Hwy 301 Near Arkabutla Lake**

*East-West Branch: Old MS 304 from Interstate 55 to Bluff Rd.*

The East-West Branch of the Delta Bluff Byway stretches from Interstate 55 west to Bluff Rd. At the eastern terminus of the route is historic Hernando, DeSoto's county seat. West of Hernando the byway crosses the Scenic DeSoto Byway at Hwy. 301 and continues on through rural DeSoto County. The



**Figure 2: Open Spaces Adjacent to Old MS 304**

byway offers visitors an excellent opportunity to experience DeSoto

County's history as they travel through the heart of Hernando's four historic districts and out into the farmlands that have historically provided DeSoto County's residents with employment and a rural lifestyle.

With the exception of the byway located in the City of Hernando, this roadway is surrounded by agricultural and very low-density residential land uses. The portions within the City of Hernando traverse neighborhoods of single family homes and the historic city core, which will contribute to the scenic nature of the byway.



**Figure 3: Old MS 304**

A major new development, known as Hernando West, is expected to be built adjacent to Old Hwy 304 on the west side of Hernando. This master-planned community will include a mix of single family homes, residences, offices, shops, and recreation. The development's architecture will retain the architectural aesthetic of the existing city, providing a coherent, attractive image. Planned

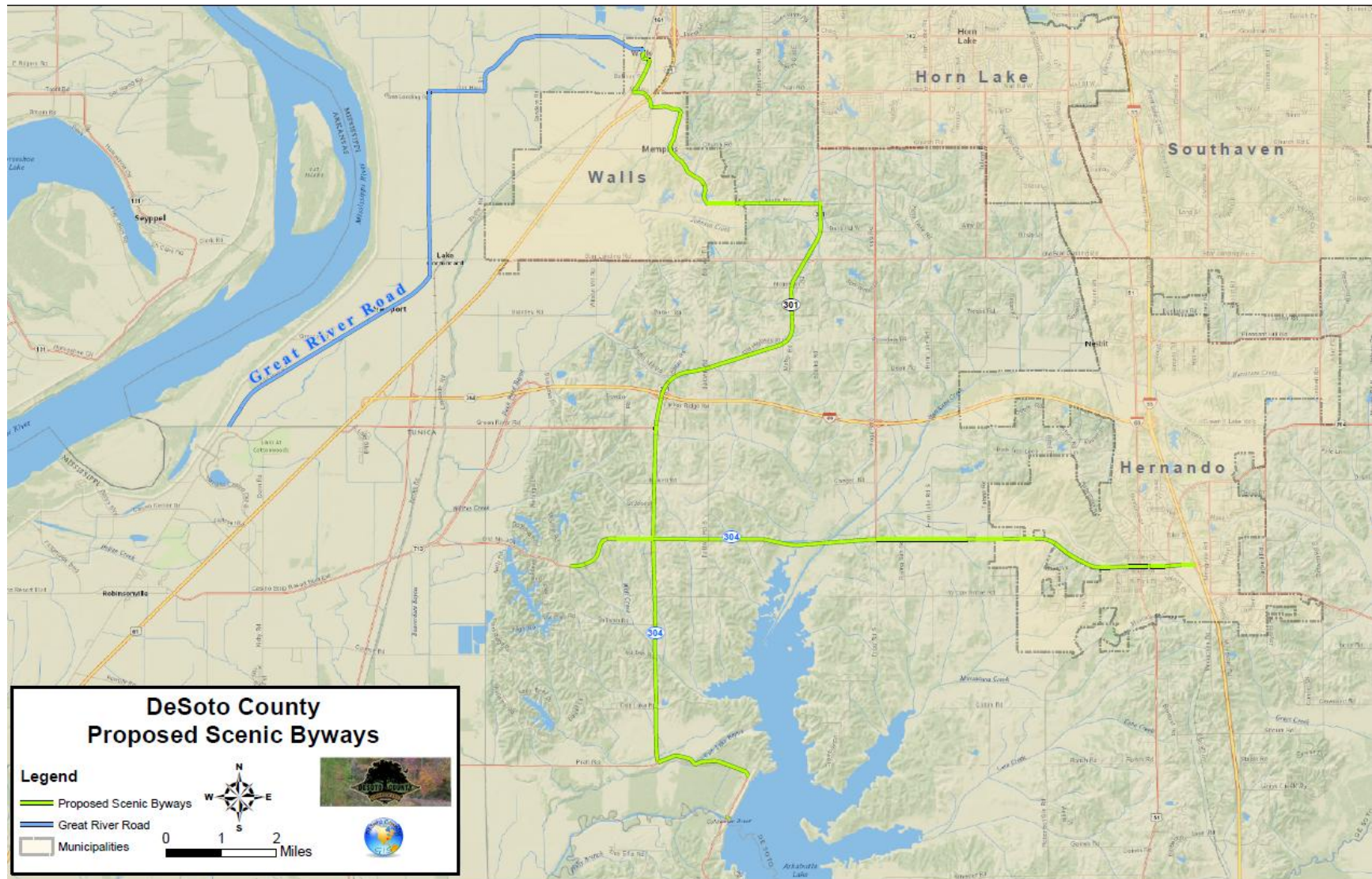
according to many of the principals of New Urbanism, Hernando West is expected to be an important new asset for DeSoto County, and despite its relatively large size its carefully developed design will help it contribute to the overall scenic nature of the proposed byway.

It should also be noted that a portion of the byway, between Interstate 55 and the historic core of Hernando, may not be considered scenic by typical standards. This portion known as the roadway, approximately ½ mile long, is a five-lane section that is home to many of Hernando's major commercial developments. The Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG) debated its inclusion for some time, but finally decided to request it be designated as a scenic byway in order to ensure the byway's linkage to Interstate 55. It was decided that the importance maintaining a logical terminus at the Interstate outweighed the inclusion of the ½ mile "non-scenic" portion of the roadway. The CAG believes that maintaining connectivity of the route with the Interstate will ensure a greater level of visibility and access to the route by travelers on I-55.



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## Location Map



## Intrinsic Quality Assessment

The individual Intrinsic Qualities associated with the Delta Bluff Byway are discussed below.

### Town of Walls

Walls is located in Northwest DeSoto County near the Mississippi River – a region called the Delta, known for its rich, dark soil. A relatively young community, Walls was originally named Alpika, an old Chickasaw Indian word. The name was changed to Walls in 1906. Walls was named after a Captain Walls who served in the War Between the States. Captain Walls was an early settler and merchant of the region. Today, Walls is a small community rich in agriculture. Cotton, soybeans, rice and corn are planted each spring.

**Intrinsic quality or qualities:** Cultural, Historic, Scenic

### Sacred Heart

In 1942, the Priests of the Sacred Heart were invited by the Catholic Bishop of Natchez to come to Mississippi to help minister to the Catholic and the poor of north Mississippi. Under the auspices of Sacred Heart Southern Missions and funded by Sacred Heart League, churches have been built, schools founded, land, housing and social services have been provided. Early missionaries consisted almost entirely of Priests of the Sacred Heart and the teaching Sisters of the School Sisters of St. Francis. Catholic education was introduced in DeSoto County with the opening of this three room Sacred Heart School in Walls, in 1947. A mere 20 students comprised the entire enrollment of Sacred Heart School's opening year in 1947. Father Steven Hogya, SCJ, had directed the school's construction. Sister Joan and Sister Spes, School Sisters of St. Francis, were the first teachers. The Sacred Heart Auto League, instituted by Father Gregory Bezy in 1955 and based in Walls, is a nationwide effort which encourages people to drive "prayerfully and carefully" to lessen injury and deaths on our nations' roads. The Auto League's symbol, the plastic statue of Jesus, was sent to hundreds of thousands of households across the country. The statue eventually became a nationally recognized icon. The statue is no longer



in use, but the Sacred Heart Auto League and its concept of prayerful, careful driving, flourishes. Membership today is near one million.

**Intrinsic quality or qualities:** Cultural, Historic

## Memphis Minnie

Lizzie “Kid” Douglas better known as Memphis Minnie was one of the premier blues artists of the 1930s and ‘40s. Memphis Minnie was born in Algiers, Louisiana on June 3, 1897. In 1905, she received her first guitar for Christmas. When she was a teenager, her family moved to Walls, Mississippi. She reportedly joined the Ringling Brothers circus as a traveling musician, and performed locally at house parties and dances with Willie Brown, Willie Moore, and



Figure 4: Memphis Minnie Album

other bluesmen around Lake Cormorant and Walls. In Memphis, she worked the streets, cafes, clubs, and parties. Memphis Minnie began performing with Joe “Kansas Joe” McCoy, whom she married in 1929. After a talent scout from Columbia heard the duo performing for tips in a barbershop, they made their first recordings that year, billed as “Kansas Joe and Memphis Minnie.” Their biggest hit was “Bumble Bee”. In later years their most recognized song would become “When the Levee Breaks.” Originally written in 1929, “When the Levee Breaks” was inspired by the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927. Led Zeppelin later covered the song in 1971.

In 1930, Memphis Minnie and Joe McCoy moved to Chicago and continued to perform and record together. The couple divorced in 1935. In 1939, Minnie married blues musician Ernest Lawlars (or Lawlers), a.k.a. “Little Son Joe.” The couple performed and recorded in a twin-guitar setting. Minnie recorded prolifically throughout the 1930s and ‘40s, scoring hits such as “Me and My Chauffeur Blues,” “Please Set a Date,” “In My Girlish Days,” and “Nothing in Rambling.”

In 1958, Memphis Minnie returned to Memphis, where she died on August 6, 1973. She is buried in Walls, Mississippi at the New Hope M.B. Church Cemetery. In 1980 she was elected to the Blues Hall of Fame.

**Intrinsic quality or qualities:** Cultural, Historic

## Arkabutla Lake

Arkabutla Lake is one of DeSoto County's most valuable natural resources. Located on the Coldwater River, it is known for its large crappie and excellent sailing conditions. Just 30 minutes from Memphis, TN, the lake has camping, swimming and picnicking facilities. Visitors from all around take pleasure in hours of fun on the open waters of the lake with their pontoon boats, canoes, kayaks, and ski-boats. The wide array of recreational opportunities and its scenic qualities are an excellent representation of the lifestyle offered by DeSoto County. Multiple recreational opportunities are available at the lake near the proposed byway, including:

*Dub Patton, Outlet Channel, South Abutment, and Bayou Point Recreation Areas:* These recreation areas are located at the southern terminus of the Scenic DeSoto Byway. In addition to scenic vistas of Arkabutla Lake, they offer a combined 368 Picnic Sites, several playgrounds, a beach, 3 boat launches, and a disc golf course. In addition, a total of 161 campsites are located at the Dub Patton and South Abutment recreation areas. These areas are an incredibly valuable resource to DeSoto County, providing residents and visitors with active, outdoor recreation in a beautiful location.

**Intrinsic quality or qualities:** Natural, Recreational, Scenic

**Ownership and management:** These areas are owned and maintained by the Army Corps of Engineers.

*Coldwater River Nature Trail:* The Coldwater River Nature trail is located southwest of Hernando, MS on Highway 301 just below the Arkabutla Lake dam on the north side of the spillway. The North Outlet Channel Recreation Area provides access to the Coldwater River Nature Trail



**Figure 5: Arkabutla Lake seen from Dub Patton Area**

System. This network of trails encompasses two hiking trails (one trail is 3 miles in length and the other is 5 miles in length) and the Big Oak Nature Trail which is a self-guided interpretive trail. The area includes pristine bottomland hardwood and pine forests where an abundance of wildlife and native plant species can be found throughout. A self-guided interpretive booklet is available at the trailhead located on the north side of the Outlet Channel. This Trail is open year round and is a collaborative effort between the U. S. Army Corp of Engineers, and the Desoto County Greenways and Parks. The site also features a picnic area and restrooms located near the trailhead.

**Intrinsic quality or qualities:** Natural, Recreational, Scenic

**Ownership and management:** The trail is owned and maintained through a collaboration between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Desoto County Greenways and Parks.

*The Swinging Bridge Nature Trail:* This trail is located southwest of Hernando, MS on Highway 301 just below the Arkabutla Lake dam on the south side of the spillway, and offers a unique trail experience. The Swinging Bridge Nature Trail is a self-guided trail that includes an old section of the Coldwater River prior to the construction of the dam. The Coldwater River was once flowing through this very trail area! Visitors enjoy a walk through this historic trail and learn about the history of the Arkabutla community or how the Corps of Engineers redirected the Coldwater River. They are also able learn how to identify native plants and wildlife, or just enjoy the tranquility of the trail's azalea garden, with information panels placed throughout the trail to help guide them along the walk.

**Intrinsic quality or qualities:** Historic, Natural, Recreational, Scenic

**Ownership and management:** The trail is owned and maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

*The Bayou Point Mountain Bike Trail:* The Bayou Point Mountain Bike trail is located southwest of Hernando, MS just off of Highway 301 on Bayou Point Rd on the south side of Arkabutla Lake. Bayou Point is currently a 5.6 mile single track loop for mountain bikes only. The trail includes everything from fast and flowing to tight and technical sections. It also includes multiple obstacles to challenge the advanced rider, such as log rides, rock skinnies, berms, jumps and drops.

Elevation change is roughly 390 ft of climbing/descending per lap. The trail is located in a somewhat remote area so there is plenty of wildlife to be seen as well as several scenic views of Arkabutla Lake. The trailhead includes a kiosk with trail map and information, ample parking, full restroom with running water and heat in the winter, playground and picnic tables. While Bayou Point does not offer camping, just a half mile away at the South Abutment are many primitive and RV campsites available.

**Intrinsic quality or qualities:** Natural, Recreational, Scenic

**Ownership and management:** The trail is owned and maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

*Sailing on Arkabutla Lake:* Nothing is more identifiable with the Arkabutla Lake than sailing. Arkabutla Lake's winds are so consistently favorable that the Delta Sailing Association (DSA) proclaims Arkabutla is the best sailing lake east of the Mississippi River. Delta Sailing Association was established in 1949 to foster sailboat racing, and sailing in general. The DSA grounds are located at Hernando Point on the eastern shore of Arkabutla Lake. The sailing season runs from March through October depending on water level. Two club races are scheduled every Saturday and Sunday during the season. DSA is home to three active racing fleets: Memphis Lightning fleet #274, Thistle fleet #72 and Hobie Fleet #134. There are many other types of sailboats as well.

**Intrinsic quality or qualities:** Natural, Recreational, Scenic

**Ownership and management:** Arkabutla's boat ramps are owned and maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps also operates several boating safety programs at the lake.

### Johnson Creek Greenway

The Johnson Creek Greenway project begins along Johnson Creek on U S Highway 61 and runs east along the creek towards the City of Horn Lake with at trailhead near the intersection of Church Rd and MS 301. The greenway, once constructed, will include portions of the Entergy Utility easement on the South side of the creek and portions of the DeSoto County Regional Utility Authority easement on the North side of the creek. This project is made possible with help

from private citizens who are donating conservation easements and land to the North Mississippi Land Trust that will hold title to the property for the benefit of the DeSoto County Mississippi Greenways program. Currently under construction the trail will be open year round with trailhead parking, landscaping and paving scheduled for completion in late 2012. Construction is being funded through a Transportation Enhancements grant from the Mississippi Department of Transportation. The trail is operated by the Desoto County Greenways and Parks program that encompasses scenic pathways, protected green space and trails designed to help improve the quality of life for the people of DeSoto County Mississippi. The Greenways system takes advantage of nature and its beauty and will encompass a variety of multipurpose trails and green space suitable for hiking, skating, jogging, walking, running, equestrian use, canoeing and kayaking and biking.

**Intrinsic quality or qualities:** Natural, Recreational, Scenic

**Ownership and management:** The Johnson Creek Greenway is maintained by Desoto County Greenways and Parks. It traverses several privately-owned parcels on easements that have been granted by the property owners.

### Arkabutla Trail

The ARK Nature trail is located 10 miles west of Hernando, MS on Highway 304 just west of Fogg Road. The trail is located in a wildlife sanctuary and consists of 2 miles of woodland walking trails already constructed with future plans for a handicap accessible wildlife demonstration trail. The Trail features interpretive signs listing area wildlife, tree identification markers and has an outdoor amphitheater that can



Figure 6: Entrance to ARK Trail



accommodate small groups for outdoor education classes. Trail-goers enjoy views of Arkabutla Lake, mixed hardwood forests, swamps and open fields planted for wildlife habitat. At the end of the second loop visitors can get a good view of Arkabutla Lake as the trail winds through the hardwood forest alongside the lake.

The ARK Trail is a collaborative effort between the U. S. Army Corp of Engineers, DeSoto County Board of Supervisors, Mississippi Wildlife Rehabilitation, Inc. and the Desoto County Greenways and Parks. The trail and park are part of the Desoto County Greenways and Parks program whose mission is to establish a greenway system that connects public and private open and green spaces with sidewalks throughout DeSoto County Mississippi while protecting, restoring and linking the natural features and their functions in order to achieve a healthy natural environment and ecological diversity. The Desoto County Greenways and Parks program encompasses scenic pathways, protected green space and trails designed to help improve the quality of life for the people of DeSoto County Mississippi. The Greenways system takes advantage of nature and its beauty and will encompass a variety of multipurpose trails and green space suitable for hiking, skating, jogging, walking, running, equestrian use, canoeing and kayaking and biking. The Desoto County Greenways and Parks program is a public-private partnership involving the DeSoto County Economic Development Council and the DeSoto County Board of Supervisors. The Desoto County Greenways and Parks plan is supported by state and County Elected officials, an advisory council plus numerous public and private DeSoto County individuals.

**Intrinsic quality or qualities:** Natural, Recreational, Scenic

**Ownership and management:** The Arkabutla Trail is maintained and owned through a collaboration between Desoto County Greenways and Parks, DeSoto County Government, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

## City of Hernando

History reflects that all land in the northern part of present day Mississippi was held in common by the Chickasaw Indian Nation from time immemorial. The Chickasaw chief governed from his court near present day Pontotoc. In 1540,

the Spanish explorer Hernando DeSoto spent the winter with these Chickasaw Indians at their Pontotoc site. DeSoto is believed to have first sighted the Mississippi River from land now within the confines of DeSoto County.

A number of years passed before any other Europeans came into this territory, but when they did, they found many of the former Indian villages had vanished. It was believed that the Indians had no immunity from the European diseases to which DeSoto's party had exposed the population.

When General Andrew Jackson and his army returned after defeating the British at the Battle of New Orleans in 1812, they began acquiring the remaining 6,422,400 acres of Chickasaw Indian lands in north Mississippi. Sixteen years of negotiations were required before the Cession Treaty of 1832 was concluded. Another four years would be needed to inventory and survey all of the land. The land was divided into square blocks of one mile (about 640 acres). Ten new counties would be formed from this land, and much of it would be awarded to the veterans by a grateful U.S. government.

Soon after Edward Orne, a former ship captain from Salem, Mass, arrived in this area with a large amount of gold and silver coins to represent the Boston and Mississippi Land Company. He purchased thousands of acres of land throughout the area.

Orne donated forty acres in this section to the local authorities to create a new county seat to be called Hernando. From this 40-acre gift, a public square of 450 feet along each side was to become the seat of government for the new county of DeSoto. The public square was surrounded by 172 residential and commercial building lots which the first officials sold to finance the expense of government.

By May, 1837, the Mississippi Legislature granted a charter for the Hernando Male & Female Academy to become the first private institute of learning in the Chickasaw Cession Treaty lands. The following year, the Hernando Female Academy separated itself from the original school, to become a school exclusively for young ladies.

The year 1839 was a banner one for growth and development. The legislature recognized Hernando as an incorporated city. The old log "dog trot" type

building that served as the courthouse was replaced with a modern two-story brick edifice. Congress established a mail route from Holly Springs to Commerce Landing by way of Hernando, and although railroad travel had not yet been introduced to the area, local promoters sold \$200,000 worth of bonds to build the Hernando, Commerce & Eastport R.R. Surveys were completed and several miles of the roadbed were constructed, but the enterprise failed to materialize.

The first federal census was taken in 1840, and it accounted for 6,990 residents. There were four Protestant churches, 10 medical doctors, and 11 attorneys registered in the county. By 1850, the total population figure had increased to 19,042.

Following the Civil War, DeSoto County's new courthouse was completed in 1872 in Hernando, and became known as the "French Castle." It remained a source of community pride until 1940 when it was destroyed by fire.

From 1957 to 1958, a sustained effort was made to bring small industry into DeSoto County to provide factory work for excess farm labor. As the population increased rapidly in 1957, the DeSoto Baptist Mission program was organized to stimulate church building and religious training in the county. To insure orderly growth and development of our resources, special permission was secured from the legislature in 1958 to zone and plan the entire county and all incorporated cities.

Today, Hernando is a thriving and growing community. While much of the growth has been attributed to its new role as a "bedroom community" in metropolitan Memphis, the town still retains its character and identity. New residents and visitors come to Hernando for its charming buildings, friendly people, and small-town lifestyle.

The proposed byway would traverse or be adjacent to 4 historic districts recognized on the National Register of Historic Places – the Commerce Street District, the Courthouse Square District, the North Side District, and the South Side (Magnolia) District. Each of these features a charming, historic collection of homes and businesses with architecture reflecting the aesthetic of small Southern towns in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Intrinsic quality or qualities:** Cultural, Historic, Scenic

**Recognition:** National Register of Historic Places - the Commerce Street District, the Courthouse Square District, the North Side District, and the South Side (Magnolia) District.

## DeSoto County Courthouse

The first courthouse in DeSoto County was a two room log cabin built in 1836. After it burned in the 1850's, a second wooden structure was built with several rooms, one of which was used as a jewelry store. This building was burned by Union troops in 1863 and only one room survived. This one room served as the courthouse until it was condemned in 1870. At this point, residents of Senatobia argued that they should have the new courthouse as flooding from the Coldwater River cut the county in half several times a year, preventing citizens from the southern part of the county from reaching the courthouse. It was at this point that a decision was made to cut DeSoto County in half along the Coldwater River so that neither Hernando nor Senatobia was cut off by flood waters during court, elections, or other business, and Tate County was born.



**Figure 7: DeSoto County Courthouse**

Once this was accomplished, DeSoto County got back to the business of building the new courthouse. Felix LaBauve, the pioneering French settler, submitted the plans for a French Castle in Paris to the board of supervisors. The plans were then given to the architectural firm of Jones and Baldwin to adapt into the functions of a courthouse. The unusual building had twin

octagonal rotundas and a large clock and bell tower. In 1934 the courthouse was remodeled by the WPA. In 1940, the building became the third courthouse to be claimed by fire at the hands of an arsonist. In 1942, the current courthouse was completed. In 1952, Fred Goldsmith of Goldsmith Department Stores donated the murals depicting the exploration of the Mississippi River to DeSoto

County. They originally hung in the Gayoso Hotel in Memphis. When Goldsmith acquired the hotel building, DeSoto Countians convinced him that the paintings should be in the courthouse. These paintings have been restored twice, once in 1952 by S. H. Chezem for \$2800. They were again restored in 1979 by Randy Jones for \$11,000.

**Intrinsic quality or qualities:** Cultural, Historic, Scenic

**Ownership and management:** The DeSoto County Courthouse is owned and maintained by the DeSoto County government.

**Recognition:** The courthouse is designated a Mississippi Landmark by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Additionally, the Courthouse square is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.

### **Hernando DeSoto Memorial Trail**

The Hernando DeSoto Memorial Trail is a well-marked paved road extending across DeSoto County to a spot believed to be in the vicinity of the “discovery” of the Mississippi River by Hernando de Soto in 1541. Legend says the de Soto camped on the present location of the court house the night before he discovered the Mississippi River.

The trail does not attempt to follow a proven route which de Soto in his entourage of 700 individuals used to traverse the land which became known as DeSoto County. De Soto's exact trail has been lost to history. As early as 1590, just 50 years after de Soto's discovery, another party of Spanish conquistadores failed to locate de Soto's trail. The “Hernando de Soto Memorial Trail” seeks to simulate de Soto's path in this portion of his trail by transporting visitors across the same type of terrain that de Soto encountered 450 years ago. The “trail” ride will traverse gentle rolling hill country, bottom lands, the bluff, and the flat lands of the Mississippi Delta as you approach the river. It also travels near the sites of three Indian villages that de Soto visited before he crossed the river into Arkansas. The proposed byway would cross the trail in the City of Hernando, and visitors can obtain a map of the trail at the Hernando Chamber of Commerce on US 51, just north of the proposed scenic byway.

**Intrinsic quality or qualities:** Archeological, Cultural, Historic, Scenic



## Eudora, Mississippi

Eudora was once known as Ellaville in honor of Ella Lewis the daughter of early settler Charles Lewis. Due to the fact that there was already an incorporated community with the same name in the state, it was renamed after the Civil War by Mr. Harrel who had moved from the Delta and had established a post office and incorporated the village. Local legend has it that the name “Eudora” was conceived when after a heavy rainstorm had muddied the roads in front of the post office, an old man’s wagon got stuck. In his efforts to free the wagon, he began to call to his mule “Dora.” Upon hearing the man saying “You, Dora, get up, get up” the postmaster, Mr. Harrel decided that “Eudora” was the new name for the community.

**Intrinsic quality or qualities:** Cultural, Historic, Scenic

## Camp Currier

Camp Currier Boy Scout Camp was built by the Chickasaw Council in 1925 on land donated by prominent Memphian Elizabeth Currier. Located in Eudora, Currier quickly became a popular destination for Mid-South area Scouts



**Figure 8: Camp Currier Entrance**

who built their own campsites and cabins. In fact Currier became so popular that the State of Mississippi constructed a road from Eudora to the Tennessee state line to make traveling easier for Scouts and their leaders. Camp Currier remains a popular overnight destination and continues to serve the year-round camping needs of area Scouts.

**Intrinsic quality or qualities:** Natural, Recreational, Scenic.

**Ownership and management:** Camp Currier is owned and operated by the Boy Scouts of America.

## Vision Statement, Goals, Objectives and Strategies

### Vision Statement

The Delta Bluff Scenic Byway will showcase the county's natural, historic and cultural resources while also offering key stakeholders the opportunity to act as responsible stewards of the county's natural environment, culture, history, transportation system, and economy.

### Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

**Goal 1 - Sustainability:** The CAG will create policies and programs that protect and enhance the resources that are associated with each of the byways.

- I. **Objective 1A:** Ensure that future development does not damage the integrity of resources.
  - a. **Strategies:**
    - i. Support the development of businesses that are consistent with the goals of the CMP
    - ii. Seek Enhancement funds to purchase scenic easements along the byway
    - iii. Encourage landowners along the byway to purchase conservation easements or donate land for future conservation easements.
    - iv. Establish design guidelines for new development along the byway.
    - v. Work with local governments to implement zoning and land use ordinances that will protect scenic views, including restrictions on billboards, cooperation with developers, and consultation with utility companies.\*
- II. **Objective 1B:** Protect resources from degradation by pollution, improper use, and other damaging factors.
  - a. **Strategies:**
    - i. Develop and encourage local volunteer efforts to help in landscaping, trash removal and other beautification programs.

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\* By order of the Board of Supervisors, DeSoto County has a standing moratorium on all new billboards in the county. This moratorium has been in place since 2000.

- ii. Encourage owners of property along the byway to adopt best practices in conservation and environmental stewardship.
- iii. Pursue grant funding for enhancement of intrinsic resources along the byway
- iv. Promote nomination of historic sites and structures for nomination on State and National Historic Registers.

**Goal 2 - Safety:** The CAG will carefully monitor safety on the roadways for both motorized and non-motorized users. It will identify opportunities for improvement and develop policies for implementing new safety measures.

- I. **Objective 2A:** Maintain an up-to-date database of crashes and other safety problems on the roadway
  - a. **Strategies:**
    - i. Work with the Sheriff's Department and Road Department to collect safety data
    - ii. Create a system for archiving, maintaining, and disseminating safety data
- II. **Objective 2B:** Identify and implement safety improvement projects
  - a. **Strategies:**
    - i. Create a safety improvement plan with specific projects through collaboration with the Road Department, the municipalities, and the MPO
    - ii. Identify and obtain funding for safety projects through state, federal, and local transportation funds
- III. **Objective 2C:** Ensure the road is safe for all users, including passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians.
  - a. **Strategies:**
    - i. Pursue the addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities to portions of the byway where they are practical and appropriate.
    - ii. Carefully consider the need for commercial truck routes on each portion of the byway. Where it is determined that truck routes are not necessary, have the roadway designated as a "No Truck" route.

**Goal 3 – Community:** The CAG will actively engage the community to obtain their input and vision for the byways. The byways and associated resources

belong to the community, and the purpose of the CAG is to act as responsible stewards of those resources on behalf of the public.

- I. **Objective 3A:** Ensure that the county Board of Supervisors and other officials are well-informed about the Byway so that they are able to communicate its benefits to their constituents.
  - a. **Strategy:**
    - i. Present information about the byway to the Board at its regular meeting at least once annually
- II. **Objective 3B:** Actively engage the community in the byways program.
  - a. **Strategy:**
    - i. Implement the Public Participation Program outlined in this Plan

**Goal 4 – Education:** The CAG will work with local museums, schools and other groups to heighten awareness of the byways and their associated resources.

- I. **Objective 4A:** Promote the byways in schools, museums, and libraries.
  - a. **Strategies:**
    - i. Prepare promotional items such as pamphlets to be given out in museums and libraries
    - ii. Visit schools to teach children about the byway and associated resources
    - iii. Encourage schools to plan field trips to visit the byway and associated resources
- II. **Objective 4B:** Provide educational opportunities along the byway.
  - a. **Strategy:**
    - i. Design educational signage to be placed along the byway. In order to prevent signage from detracting from the scenic quality of the byway, signs will be placed at least ½ mile apart, unless they are necessary for way-finding by visitors. See the Signage and Interpretation Program of this plan for further detail.

**Goal 5 – Economy:** The CAG will use the byways designation as a tool to attract more visitors, residents and businesses to DeSoto County. It will create marketing and advertising programs for the byways, including on-street signage.

- I. **Objective 5A:** Implement the Tourism Development, Marketing & Promotion Program outlined in this plan.



- a. **Strategies:** Specific strategies are discussed in the Tourism Development, Marketing & Promotion Program
- II. **Objective 5B:** Implement the Recreation Development Program outlined in this plan.
  - a. **Strategies:** Specific Strategies are discussed in the Recreation Development Program outlined in this plan

## Public Participation Program

The CAG will perform the following tasks related to public participation:

**Public Meeting:** A public hearing for the Byway was held on August 6, 2012 during the DeSoto County Board of Supervisors meeting. The text of the advertisement for that meeting can be found in Appendix A. The CAG will also conduct an annual open house-style public meeting in which residents will be invited to view maps of the byways and descriptions of their associated resources. CAG members will be available to answer questions about the designation. At the meeting interested citizens will be asked to sign up to participate in a Citizen Task Force. The meeting will be advertised in local papers three weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

**Citizen Task Force:** A small number of interested citizens will participate in a task force that will be responsible for refining the goals of the CAG and CMP. The Task Force will also nominate a member to represent citizens on the CAG.

**CAG Citizen Representative:** One citizen will be asked to represent the interests of the general public on the CAG. This person's input into the CAG and CMP will be equal to that of all other members.

## **Tourism Development, Marketing and Promotional Program**

### **Introduction**

The development of a scenic byway trail is principally intended to improve local economies, promote tourism development, gain market visibility for byway communities, and protect the special resources that draw visitors to the Byway area. Many communities along the byway route offer unique and interesting traveling experiences, but would not stand out on their own as major destinations. Through cooperative planning, communities along the route can market themselves as a destination where travelers can come to experience the Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway in its many forms. As much of the byway is rural in nature, with low density population and development, many local economies rely heavily on tourism to provide activity in their communities.

Promotional and marketing activities will stimulate growth in retail, hospitality services, and the production and packaging of the locally produced foods and crafts contributing to the viability of byway communities. Efforts to develop and promote the intrinsic resources located in byway communities will benefit residents and tourists alike. For example, the recent construction of the DeSoto County Historical Museum in the City of Hernando has created a destination for byway travelers looking to find information on the County's history. The preservation and interpretation of historical artifacts though, is just as important for local residents and community stakeholders whose own family histories are tied to the area. The desire to capitalize on byway promotion serves as an incentive for communities to preserve and enhance their historical, cultural, and recreational resources. Better stewardship of these resources enhances the community's appeal to tourists and new, entrepreneurial residents. Corridor-wide identification with the byway's themes encourages regional cooperation in planning and promotions.

### **Tourism Marketing and Promotional Strategies**

The tourism strategies of the Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway are as follows:

1. Promote and encourage tourism commerce and communication between byway communities in order to strengthen marketing efforts;
2. Improve the availability of basic tourist information via the Internet and other marketing outlets;
3. Develop theme-based packages and tourism guides to enhance the byway experience and extend visitor stays;
4. Support the development and promotion of special events in byway communities;
5. Develop strategies to improve shoulder season, year round, new and repeat visitation by appealing to market interests of a broad audience;
6. Provide a quality visitor experience and develop strategies to improve the traveler's experience;

7. Develop a Byway Marketing and Interpretation Plan and work directly with communities on promotions and branding; and,
8. Create new comfort facilities to enhance the visitor experience.

**Strategy #1. Promote and encourage tourism commerce and communication between byway communities in order to strengthen marketing efforts.**

The proposed routing of the Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway so that it will continue along the entire length of the MS Delta Bluffs area of DeSoto County will help to develop the byway's theme and will encourage increased participation among byway communities. Furthermore, developing a logo and theme which will be used in by all byway communities will provide a framework for a more cohesive marketing effort. By highlighting the unique resources that each community can offer along the Scenic Byways Corridor, communities can begin to work together to bring tourists to the entire area, rather than competing with each other for visitors.

**Strategy #2. Improve the availability of basic tourist information via the Internet and other marketing outlets.**

Improving access to trip planning information will encourage more people to travel the byway and will help to improve their actual visitor experience. With more and more people using the internet to make their vacation planning decisions, plan their trips, and book their reservations, it is important to make sure that they can readily find information on the experience offered along the Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway. Easily locating lodging and other visitor services during their travel advance travel planning on the Internet also helps to reassure travelers that they will have all that they need and are looking for when visiting the DeSoto County Scenic Byways area. A centralized website: [www.DeSotogreenways.org](http://www.DeSotogreenways.org) can be used for all byway communities to promote the Delta Bluffs Scenic Byways traveling experience. Chambers of Commerce, tourism agencies, and Desoto County Greenways and Parks and Parks must work together to develop website capacity to provide information on byway resources, attractions, services and events that is comprehensive and cohesive along the entire length of the byway.

Once on the route, travelers should be able to readily locate tourist information centers should they require information or directions. An assessment of the route is needed to evaluate adequacy of information centers.

**Strategy #3. Develop theme-based packages and tourism guides to enhance the byway experience and extend visitor stays.**

While visitors may be drawn to the byway through the image and promise portrayed through its marketing and promotion, it is up to byway stakeholders to enhance the actual visitor experience and to meet travelers' expectations. We cannot assume that byway travelers will find the right combination of experiences on their own. By packaging and promoting resources and attractions in theme-based brochures (both

print and web- based), we improve the odds that visitors will connect with what they seek.

A “Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway” guide could provide travelers with information on where they could canoe or kayak or utilize some of the areas trails and picnic areas, especially in the Arkabutla Lake Area. The brochure would also highlight scenic spots to stop and view wildlife, good fishing access points, and local festivals or events centered around Hernando, Walls or Arkabutla Lake.

**Strategy #4. Support the development and promotion of special events in byway communities.**

There exist a number of events that could be further promoted and expanded along the byway that already tie into the themes of the Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway. Developing and coordinating a four seasons events calendar of these key events may improve joint advertising of events and could aid the planning of additional new events. The “Special Tourism Sites, Attractions, Services, and Events” section of this CMP identifies a number of existing theme-related events.

**Strategy #5. Develop strategies to improve shoulder season, year round, new and repeat visitation by appealing to market interests of a broad audience.**

There exist a number of events that could be further promoted and expanded along the byway that already tie into the themes of the Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway. Developing and coordinating a four seasons events calendar of these key events may improve joint advertising of events and could aid the planning of additional new events. The benefit of successful special events is not only the influx of visitors associated with the event itself, but especially in the extra publicity that helps to bring more attention to the existence of the byway and its various year-round offerings. The “Special Tourism Sites, Attractions, and Services” section of this CMP identifies a number of existing theme-related events.

Theme-based packages are another strategy for reaching a broad range of specific market niches and encouraging both new and repeat visitation. A visitor may travel to the region for one reason, and then learn of another opportunity during a different season of the year that causes them to return. See Strategy #3, above.

**Strategy #6. Provide a quality visitor experience and develop strategies to improve the traveler’s experience.**

A number of factors affect the overall quality of the visitor experience. These include the availability of basic information on lodging, attractions, and services; the ability to navigate the byway and find its resources; comfort and safety; the impact of inclement weather; and the ability to participate in activities unique to their particular interests. A unique positive experience encourages repeat and extended visitor stays, as well as in word-of-mouth promotion that brings new visitors.

**Strategy #7. Develop a Byway Marketing and Interpretation Plan and work directly with communities on promotions and branding.**

The proposed Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway will travel along the entire length of MS 304 from Hernando to the Tunica County Line, as well as the historic and scenic route from Walls to MS301 on to Arkabutla Lake. Each segment of the proposed scenic byway runs from the Hills to the Delta with views of scenic bluffs along the way. This allows for use of a common theme with which these scenic byway communities can more strongly identify will encourage stakeholders to be more engaged. It provides a common rallying point to which they all feel connected, and around which they will cooperatively work together. The proposed “Delta Bluffs” theme is also more authentic to the byway traveler, thereby facilitating promotional efforts that are consistent with both the product label (byway name) and the actual experience of that product. The adoption of a fitting logo is therefore an essential first step to effectively branding this scenic byway.

**Strategy #8. Create new comfort facilities to enhance the visitor experience.**

Comfort stations and rest areas should be available and strategically located for traveler convenience. When traveling long stretches of a rural Byway, the need for a comfort facility can affect how much time a visitor will take to enjoy the more isolated Byway resources or whether or not they will stop to patronize a local shop or farm stand.

Private establishments may gain more sales by offering public restroom facilities in their business. By utilizing the rest areas at the ARK trails, Johnson Creek Greenway and at Arkabutla Lake will allow the visitor to take time and enjoy some of the historical and recreational resources in the area.

**Tourism organizations serving the Delta Bluff Scenic Byway Communities:**

***Mississippi Department of Tourism***

***DeSoto County Tourism***

[www.SoDeSoto.com](http://www.SoDeSoto.com)

4716 Pepper Chase Drive

Southaven, MS 38671

(662) 393-8770

(662) 393-8771

[info@soDeSoto.com](mailto:info@soDeSoto.com)

***Arkabutla Lake***

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

3905 Arkabutla Dam Rd

Coldwater, MS 38618-6548

Phone: (662) 562-6261

<http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/visitors/projects.cfm?Id=B400600>

***DeSoto County***



Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan  
DeSoto County, Mississippi

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING ADDRESS

365 Loshier Street  
Hernando, MS 38632

COURTHOUSE ADDRESS

2535 Highway 51 S  
Hernando, MS 38632  
662-429-1460

[www.DeSotoms.com](http://www.DeSotoms.com)

***Town of Walls***

Town Hall

Mailing address:

P.O. Box 35

Walls, MS 38680

Physical Address:

9087 Nail Road

Walls, MS 38680

[www.townofwalls.com](http://www.townofwalls.com)

Phone: 662-781-1282

Fax: 662-781-5444

[info@townofwalls.com](mailto:info@townofwalls.com)

***City of Hernando***

475 West Commerce Street

Hernando, MS 38632

662-429-9092

<http://cityofhernando.org>

***Hernando Chamber of Commerce***

Hernando Main Street Chamber of Commerce

2440 Hwy. 51 South

Hernando, MS 38632

Phone: (662) 429-9055

Fax: (662) 429-2909

[chamber@hernandoms.org](mailto:chamber@hernandoms.org)

[www.hernandoms.org](http://www.hernandoms.org)

## Recreation Development Program

The Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway is rich in a variety of recreational opportunities. Each of these provides an excellent opportunity for tourism development. This section provides an overview of current, four-season recreational resources and is followed by a discussion of the recreation Strategies from the implementation plan.

### Overview of existing recreation opportunities

The Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway is rich in opportunities for both active and passive outdoor recreation.

Active recreation opportunities include:

- Hiking
- Bicycling and mountain biking
- Small and large game hunting
- Fishing
- Canoeing, kayaking, and sailing

Passive recreation activities include:

- Birding and wildlife viewing
- Camping
- Picnicking

### Accessible Recreation Activities

There are numerous opportunities for disabled individuals to enjoy the outdoors. These include handicap accessible trails at the Coldwater River Nature Trail at Arkabutla Lake and the Johnson Creek multipurpose trail currently under construction, the Arkabutla Lake Dub Patton Picnic Area and the Picnic Area at Arkabutla Dam. A number of handicap accessible trails exist in various locations along the byway including some in the Village of Lake Cormorant, the City of Walls, and in the City of Hernando.

### Non-motorized Trails

Opportunities for hiking exist in community parks and Corp of Engineers forestlands throughout the area. Staff at local Chambers of Commerce offers extensive information on recreational opportunities. The Mississippi Department of Tourism website at [www.visitmississippi.org/](http://www.visitmississippi.org/) provides complete coverage of recreational resources on state land. Information on federal land opportunities with the Corp of Engineers is also available through the local office at (662)562-6161.

### Bicycling and Mountain Biking

Cycling enthusiasts traveling the byway will enjoy a unique perspective of the landscape and its communities. Rather than pedaling the length of the byway, some travelers may prefer to bring their bicycles along and enjoy a number of the designated bike-touring loops identified by local cyclists to more closely experience local history, the environment, or small-town atmosphere of the region's communities. Those who prefer mountain biking will find opportunities at Arkabutla Lake on the designated Mountain Bike Trails.

Desoto County Greenways and Parks and Parks [www.DeSotogreenways.org](http://www.DeSotogreenways.org) has a comprehensive Biking website which is a valuable resource for cyclists and mountain bikers.

### **Hunting & Fishing**

Hunting and fishing is a cultural tradition among region's population. Visitors may also enjoy these traditions on federal forest lands and on fishing access sites throughout the region. Excellent opportunities are also available on private lands, with landowner permission. Game species include deer, turkey, squirrel, quail, rabbit, and other small game. The Mississippi River and Arkabutla Lake offers strong fish populations and good public access along its entire length. Available species include catfish, bream, crappie, largemouth bass, carp, and several other species.

### **Canoeing and Kayaking**

Arkabutla Lake and the Coldwater river offer canoeing and kayaking opportunities. Launch access is available at key points along the Coldwater River and can be found at [www.coldwatertrail.org](http://www.coldwatertrail.org).

### **Geo-caching**

The vast tracks of public lands around Arkabutla Lake make the region popular for geo-caching. Geo-caching is activity designed for GPS users who obtain coordinates of a hidden "cache" of goodies or trinkets and then search for these items, register in the logbook, and usually leave an item in return for the item you take. More information on these activities may be found at [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com). If you are new to these activities, the site has a "Getting Started" section that explains the activity, common protocols, needed equipment, and tips. If you are already experienced in these activities, hints and coordinates for caches may be located by entering a search by community name, zip code, or county.

### **Wildlife Viewing and Nature Interpretation**

Arkabutla Lake and the area trails provide abundant habitat for bird watching and wildlife viewing on the byway. The ARK Nature Trail is located on 152 acres and features many different species of trees and shrubs. A wildlife area provides escape cover and nesting areas where birds and mammals can feed on the naturally growing seeds and fruits. The site features interpretive signage of the area flora and fauna.

## Recreation Development Strategies

### Strategy #1: Enhance and promote existing recreation opportunities

As illustrated above, the Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway offers a great variety of recreation opportunities. Improvements are needed to recreational infrastructure such as access points, informational kiosks, and comfort stations for hikers, canoeists, and fishermen. A thorough inventory of existing resources and their condition should be conducted so that byway stakeholders can identify where improvements are most needed.

Better linkages are needed between the on land trail systems and the waterway. The *Coldwater River Canoe and Kayak Trail* [www.coldwatertrail.org](http://www.coldwatertrail.org) has identified a possible route for a recreational trail system that would extend the entire length of the Coldwater River. The Mississippi River access at the Hernando DeSoto River Park also offers recreational opportunities linking the Delta Bluffs Scenic Byways to the Great River Road Scenic Byway. By improving linkages to and between these various trail systems could also improve resource access and encourage longer stays.

Use of website links and theme-based brochures (crafts, foods, bicycling, fishing, paddling, etc.) can draw greater attention to niche activities that would appeal to different interests. For example, a paddling brochure could describe various paddling day trips, local paddling events, and related service businesses. Another brochure could provide information on fishing opportunities along various segments of the Coldwater River, highlighting publicly accessible fishing spots as well as local tournaments and derbies.

### Strategy #2: Create additional recreation opportunities that extend visitor stays or encourage repeat visits to the region.

Local officials and recreation groups should look for opportunities to expand four season recreation activities and create additional opportunities: such as improved trail linkages, additional river access points, and events and festivals to coordinate with these resources. The infrastructure needed for these recreational activities, such as public restrooms near river access points and informational kiosks, must also be taken into consideration. Such planning efforts are already underway in several communities along the byway (Hernando and Arkabutla Lake). A nature festival (Eaglefest) <http://www.DeSotoeaglefest.com> is planned beginning in the fall of 2013. Networking the planned improvements to neighboring Byway communities will support the growth of more desirable recreational offerings along the route.

## Signage and Interpretation Program

### Introduction

An effective signage program is key to ensuring a positive experience for byway travelers. Signage along the Byway route is governed by an extensive set of rules and regulations with federal and state origins. The lead agency governing signage along official state scenic Byways in Mississippi is the Mississippi Department of Transportation. Local zoning laws must also be considered. Signage regulations fall into four categories:

1. Official Signs provided by Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT)
2. Official Signs provided and permitted by MDOT
3. Official Signs permitted by MDOT, including Tourist Oriented Directional Signage (also known as TODS) – provided by businesses or contributing resource/attraction owner
4. Non-Official Signs provided by communities are placed outside the State right-of way near municipal boundaries to identify byway communities. The signs must be approved by MDOT and are subject to local review and approval.

Within these categories, an entire “family” of sign types exists. Interpreting existing signage language and regulations has been difficult for the professional transportation planners, as well as the layperson volunteer. Additionally, the Desoto County Greenways and Parks and Parks new design standards Guide to Signage should be consulted to insure that the Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway route will place effective signage and avoid the tendency to over-sign travel and touring routes.

Introductory workshops on the byway signage manuals should be planned for local highway departments, community planners, and other byway stakeholders as a first step in pursuing the Strategies below. Encouraging the use of the manual will guide project implementers in the proper design, construction, permitting, and installation of signs along the corridor. Byway communities will need guidance on interpreting the new signage manual, locating signage funding opportunities, and establishing contacts with capable administrators to lead community signage efforts as they move into the development, placement, and installation of desired signs.

### Overview of Signage Types and Issues

#### Tourist Oriented Directional Signs

Tourist Oriented Directional Signs (TODS) will be used to lead visitors to area businesses located off of the Byway’s primary route. Some on-route businesses may also qualify for TODS. Communities rely on a steady stream of visitor spending to remain viable in a rural economy dependent on tourism dollars.

## **Destination Markers**

Resource Destination Markers are small signs placed along the route to capture the traveler's attention and direct them to Byway resources. These Destination Markers are usually provided and installed by the Department of Transportation. Parks, fishing access points, boat launches, wildlife viewing areas and trail heads should be clearly marked. Byway Pedestrian Directional signs will guide visitors to various points of interest once they are out of their vehicles. To maintain continuity in signing the byway, pedestrian directional signs will feature the State's byway logo and lettering for the Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway. Byway groups still need to make decisions about where these signs are needed. Those who decide to move forward will have to absorb all costs to design and fabricate the signs. The groups will have to secure permission from any involved landowners, follow local ordinances and install the signs outside the byway's right-of-way.

## **Interpretive Signs**

Interpretive signs provide information about significant events, places, people or things. The use of the byway logo on each interpretive sign reinforces the interconnected system and promotes visitation. These signs will be used to help visitors to learn more about the Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway's history, culture, natural systems and recreation. The special stories about local lore, life, and events need to be shared to improve the visitor's experience and create a greater awareness and appreciation for the area. When designing interpretive signs, communities should take the opportunity to include information highlighting other resources to encourage byway users to move from one area to another and to promote visitation of underused resources. A well-coordinated system of interpretive signs will build the expectation that each new site brings another worthwhile experience. In order to avoid over-signing the byway, kiosks, centralized strategic interpretation spaces, and stop-offs should be used, particularly in communities along the route. These help inform the traveler of the historic, cultural, recreational and natural resources in the immediate area, as well as those at the "next" stop. Coordinating "on the ground" signage locations with an interpretive map and guide help the visitor to locate these interpretive spots.

## **Official Byway Route Identification Signs**

Byway communities will be encouraged to use the byway's name and logo on all signage to lend continuity to the Byway experience. Cities, towns and villages will benefit from the appeal of the brand name which umbrellas the entire route. The repeated use of the easily recognizable name and graphic prominently displayed on signs conditions visitors to watch for similar signs as they alert travelers that they are approaching new services, attractions, or resources.

## **Community Welcome Identification Signs**



The Corridor Management Plan organizers agree that Community Welcome Identification Signs should be used to highlight gateways to cities, towns, and villages. Upon approval of this Corridor Management Plan, Scenic Byway communities will be encouraged to develop welcome signs and part of the CMP. The welcome signs will include locally selected artwork and will also show the byway name and logo. Sign installers will seek Mississippi Department of Transportation approval and adhere to all local ordinances.

## **Bikeway Signage**

CMP organizers want to work towards having consistent and regularly spaced bike route marking and directional signage for cyclists and vehicle operators along the Scenic Byway as allowed by MDOT. Some of the Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway routes are already marked with bike lane pavement markers or “Shared Roadway” signs. Regardless, drivers need continual reminders of random presence of cyclers and other byway users. The pavement markers would be used only in cases where the shoulder width meets MDOT requirements. The popularity of bicycling and mountain biking continues to grow within the state as alternative means of transportation and as recreational sports. Opportunities exist for expansion of routes and linkages, both within the community and along the route. Additional discussion is needed regarding the parallel bicycle routes and loop routes.

## **Signage and Interpretation Strategies**

### **Strategy #1. Conduct a comprehensive signage assessment.**

During CMP development, it became evident that a comprehensive signage assessment is needed corridor wide. It is strongly recommended that funding be secured to address the adequacy and legality of existing signage and interpretation in place including:

- Complete inventory of all existing signs with name of responsible party;
- Gather steward ownership contact information, including full resource name and significance;
- Notation of locations with lack of signage and locations needing improved signage.

### **Strategy #2. Enhance wayfinding and strengthen byway identity through an effective directional signage program.**

Wayfinding signage provides direction and peace of mind as visitors travel along the byway route and as they venture off the main route to access various services, attractions, and recreational opportunities. Since Byway users will include pedestrians, bicyclists, recreational vehicle users, and motorists, it is important that wayfinding signage be developed that will accommodate each of these groups. It is important to

consider the needs of each of these groups when developing signage plans. In addition, byway communities along the entire route must coordinate with one another to ensure that wayfinding signage is consistent and cohesive. Desoto County Greenways and Parks and Parks lists various recreational trail networks and a comprehensive signage strategy will be critical in order to avoid a “clutter of signs,” which ultimately confuse and disrupt the travel experience. Standardized, common sense criteria, such as the following, should be applied to all interpretation and signage activities along the Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway:

- Simple
- Well designed
- Easy to read
- Interesting to read (for interpretive signage)
- Well timed
- Well placed
- Thematic
- Easy to follow
- Legal (programmatic and local)

An appropriate logo enhances the byway’s identity and helps travelers to quickly recognize directional signage as they navigate along the byway route. The development of attractive welcome signs for byway communities that incorporate the new logo will also help travelers to readily identify communities along the route and will further provide a cohesive design between communities.

### **Strategy #3. Enhance visitors’ and residents’ understanding and appreciation of byway resources through education & interpretation.**

With such a vast array of historical, cultural and recreational resources along the byway route, interpretive signage to help the visitor to better understand and appreciate these resources will be a key component of any signage program. Well designed and properly placed interpretive signage will engage byway travelers and help them to experience all that the byway has to offer. Chambers of commerce, historians, historical societies, county tourism agencies, municipal leaders, local artists, and MDOT should work together to develop a thematic signage program that enhances the overall byway image. Signage should be consistent with byway signage to provide a more cohesive traveling experience. The signage theme should be consistently applied to web content and print materials as well, in order to further reinforce the image and experience of the byway. Additionally, future interpretive material should be based on current marketing and branding research which will need to be conducted following the approval of the CMP.

## Implementation Strategy

### Partnerships

The following organizations are represented on the CAG:

- DeSoto County Administration
- DeSoto County Planning and GIS
- DeSoto County Road Department
- DeSoto County Greenways and Parks
- DeSoto County Historic Museum
- City of Hernando Planning
- City of Walls Planning and Administration
- Citizen Representative
- DeSoto County Economic Development Council

In addition to the CAG members, the following organizations will be invited to participate in one or more components of this plan:

- DeSoto County Sheriff's Department
- Mississippi Department of Transportation
- Memphis MPO
- DeSoto County Schools
- DeSoto County Tourism

### Organizational Responsibilities

The tables below describe the responsibilities of each partner organization, broken down by goal, objective, and strategy.

Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan  
DeSoto County, Mississippi

	CAG Members										Other Partners			
	DeSoto County Administration	DeSoto County Planning and GIS	DeSoto County Road Department	DeSoto County Greenways and Parks	DeSoto County Historic Museum	City of Hernando Planning	City of Walls Planning and Administration	Citizen Representative	DeSoto County Economic Development Council	DeSoto County Sheriff's Department	Mississippi Department of Transportation	Memphis MPO	DeSoto County Schools	DeSoto County Tourism
Goal 1 – Sustainability: The CAG will create policies and programs that protect and enhance the resources that are associated with each of the byways.														
Objective 1A: Ensure that future development does not damage the integrity of resources.														
Support the development of businesses that are consistent with the goals of the CMP	X	X				X	X		X					
Seek Enhancement funds to purchase scenic easements along the byway	X		X	X		X	X				X	X		
Encourage landowners along the byway to purchase conservation easements or donate land for future conservation easements.	X	X		X		X	X							
Establish design guidelines for new development along the byway.		X				X	X							

Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan  
DeSoto County, Mississippi

Work with local governments to implement zoning and land use ordinances that will protect scenic views, including restrictions on billboards, cooperation with developers, and consultation with utility companies.	X						X	X				X			
Objective 1B: Protect resources from degradation by pollution, improper use, and other damaging factors.															
Develop and encourage local volunteer efforts to help in landscaping, trash removal and other beautification programs.				X					X	X					
Encourage owners of property along the byway to adopt best practices in conservation and environmental stewardship.	X	X		X			X	X							
Pursue grant funding for enhancement of intrinsic resources along the byway	X			X			X	X		X		X	X		
Promote nomination of historic sites and structures for nomination on State and National Historic Registers.				X	X				X	X					

Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan  
DeSoto County, Mississippi

	CAG Members										Other Partners			
	DeSoto County Administration	DeSoto County Planning and GIS	DeSoto County Road Department	DeSoto County Greenways and Parks	DeSoto County Historic Museum	City of Hernando Planning	City of Walls Planning and Administration	Citizen Representative	DeSoto County Economic Development Council	DeSoto County Sheriff's Department	Mississippi Department of Transportation	Memphis MPO	DeSoto County Schools	DeSoto County Tourism
Goal 2 - Safety: The CAG will carefully monitor safety on the roadways for both motorized and non-motorized users. It will identify opportunities for improvement and develop policies for implementing new safety measures.														
Objective 2A: Maintain an up-to-date database of crashes and other safety problems on the roadway														
Work with the Sheriff's Department and Road Department to collect safety data		X	X							X	X	X		
Create a system for archiving, maintaining, and disseminating safety data		X	X											
Objective 2B: Identify and implement safety improvement projects														
Create a safety improvement plan with specific projects through collaboration with the Road Department, the		X	X			X	X				X	X		



Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan  
DeSoto County, Mississippi

municipalities, and the MPO														
Identify and obtain funding for safety projects through state, federal, and local transportation funds	X	X	X			X	X			X	X	X		
Objective 2C: Ensure the road is safe for all users, including passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians.														
Pursue the addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities to portions of the byway where they are practical and appropriate.	X		X	X		X	X				X	X		
Carefully consider the need for commercial truck routes on each portion of the byway. Where it is determined that truck routes are not necessary, have the roadway designated as a “No Truck” route.	X		X			X	X				X			

Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan  
DeSoto County, Mississippi

	CAG Members										Other Partners				
	DeSoto County Administration	DeSoto County Planning and GIS	DeSoto County Road Department	DeSoto County Greenways and Parks	DeSoto County Historic Museum	City of Hernando Planning	City of Walls Planning and Administration	Citizen Representative	DeSoto County Economic Development Council	DeSoto County Sheriff's Department	Mississippi Department of Transportation	Memphis MPO	DeSoto County Schools	DeSoto County Tourism	
Goal 3 – Community: The CAG will actively engage the community to obtain their input and vision for the byways. The byways and associated resources belong to the community, and the purpose of the CAG is to act as responsible stewards of those resources on behalf of the public.															
Objective 3A: Ensure that the county Board of Supervisors and other officials are well-informed about the Byway so that they are able to communicate its benefits to their constituents.															
Present information about the byway to the Board at its regular meeting at least once annually	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Objective 3B: Actively engage the community in the byways program.															

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Implement the Public Participation Program outlined in this Plan	X			X										
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Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan  
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	DeSoto County Administration	DeSoto County Planning and GIS	DeSoto County Road Department	DeSoto County Greenways and Parks	DeSoto County Historic Museum	City of Hernando Planning	City of Walls Planning and Administration	Citizen Representative	DeSoto County Economic Development Council	DeSoto County Sheriff's Department	Mississippi Department of Transportation	Memphis MPO	DeSoto County Schools	DeSoto County Tourism	
Goal 4 – Education: The CAG will work with local museums, schools and other groups to heighten awareness of the byways and their associated resources.															
Objective 4A: Promote the byways in schools, museums, and libraries.															
Prepare promotional items such as pamphlets to be given out in museums and libraries	X			X	X				X				X	X	
Visit schools to teach children about the byway and associated resources				X	X			X					X		
Encourage schools to plan field trips to visit the byway and associated resources				X	X			X					X		
Objective 4B: Provide educational opportunities along the byway.															

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Design educational signage to be placed along the byway. In order to prevent signage from detracting from the scenic quality of the byway, signs will be placed at least ½ mile apart, unless they are necessary for way-finding by visitors. See the Signage and Interpretation Program of this plan for further detail.				X	X				X					X
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Goal 5 – Economy: The CAG will use the byways designation as a tool to attract more visitors, residents and businesses to DeSoto County. It will create marketing and advertising programs for the byways, including on-street signage.															
Objective 5A: Implement the Tourism Development, Marketing & Promotion Program outlined in this plan.															
Specific strategies are discussed in the Tourism Development, Marketing & Promotion Program	X			X	X	X	X		X					X	
Objective 5B: Implement the Recreation Development Program outlined in this plan.															



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Specific Strategies are discussed in the Recreation Development Program outlined in this plan	X			X										X
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## Appendix A – Public Meeting Advertisement Text

TO PARTIES OF INTEREST AND CITIZENS OF DESOTO COUNTY

A public hearing will be held by the DeSoto County Board of Supervisors in regard to the following matter:

### PUBLIC HEARING

**Scenic Byways Designation** – The DeSoto County Board of Supervisors is seeking public comment on the proposed Mississippi Scenic Byways Designation for certain segments of roads that will connect with Old Highway 61, part of the Great River Road National Scenic Byway.

The proposed segments are:

1. Nail Road, from Mississippi Highway 301 to Highway 161 (Great River Rd). (Connectivity to Great River Road through the City of Walls via US 61, Delta View Rd., Highway 161, and 2nd St.)
2. Mississippi Highway 301 from Nail Rd. to Arkabutla Lake
3. Old Highway 304 from Interstate 55 to Bluff Rd.

Said hearing will be held on Monday, August 6, 2012 beginning at 11:00 a.m. in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Board Room of the DeSoto County Administration Building, 365 Losher Street, Hernando, Mississippi.

Information regarding this matter may be obtained from the office of the DeSoto County Planning Commission, 365 Losher Street, Suite 200, Hernando, Mississippi.

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WITNESS MY SIGNATURE, THIS THE 20<sup>th</sup> DAY OF JULY, 2012.

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W. E. DAVIS,  
CLERK OF THE DESOTO COUNTY  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS